

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10-20 are pending, with claims 1, 10, and 16 being independent. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,774,378 to Yang (Yang). Claim 9 was previously cancelled. Claim 1 is amended by virtue of this response, as discussed in more detail below.

Claims 2 and 6 have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter, and claims 10-20 are allowed. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating the presence of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 6, and 10-20.

Applicant further thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephone conversation of April 22, 2004. During the telephone conversation, it was agreed that clarifying claim 1 to recite a combination of sensor outputs to obtain apparent process status information, in the context of the remaining elements of claim 1, would distinguish claim 1 over the prior art of record, including Yang. This agreement is consistent with the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance with respect to claims 10 and 16, which states that "combining first and second sensor signals to obtain apparent status information is not disclosed, suggested, or made obvious by the prior art of record."

Although Applicant does not necessarily agree that Yang discloses a combination of sensor outputs or other subject matter of claim 1 as cited in the present Office Action, Applicant submits the above-described amendments for the purpose of furthering prosecution, and, further, retains the right to pursue such subject matter in continuation applications.

Based on the above, all of claims 1-8 and 10-20 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is hereby requested in the Examiner's next official communication.

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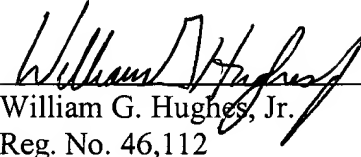
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Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

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